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**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
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Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers**

**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
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BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 04-20

DATE: 04/26/2004

FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	WtW	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	EP	<input type="checkbox"/> ★			

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: W-2 Time Limit Extension Policy Update

CROSS REFERENCE: [W-2 Manual, 2.3.5](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to communicate Wisconsin Works (W-2) time limit extension policy changes and clarifications as well as new policies related to extensions.

BACKGROUND

The Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) recently issued Operations [Memo 04-13](#) explaining changes to the W-2 time limit extension decision-making process. That memo granted the W-2 agencies decision-making authority for all extension approvals without requiring input from the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), as was previously required. This change gave the division the opportunity to review a number of the existing extension policies and procedures. Based upon that review, the division has clarified or changed some of the existing extension policies. In addition, the division has also developed new extension policies that assist in ensuring that those W-2 participants that do reach their time limits have been through the W-2 assessment process and have received appropriate services while on W-2.

POLICY - NEW**THE BARRIER SCREENING TOOL (BST), FORMAL ASSESSMENTS AND EXTENSION DECISIONS**

Under current BST policy, the BST must be completed within 30 calendar days after the initial placement of a participant into a W-2 Transitions (W-2 T), Community Service Job (CSJ), Trial Job (TJ) or Case Management Services (CMS) placement.

Depending upon the participant's history with the W-2 program, by the time a participant reaches a W-2 time limit, much time may have passed and considerable changes in the participant's circumstances might have occurred. Because of this and because denying an extension to the time limit is a very serious case management step, we are adding a requirement that the [Barrier Screening Tool \(BST\)](#) be offered again if the FEP is considering denying an *initial* 24- or 60-month W-2 time limit extension unless it was completed or declined within 12 calendar months prior to the participant's 24th or 60th month. If it was not completed or declined within 12 calendar months prior to the end of the time limit, the FEP cannot deny an extension until the BST is offered to the participant using the BST Agreement form. A check of Client Assistance for Reemployment and Economic Support (CARES) screen WPRU will assist the FEP in determining the last date the BST was completed, declined or updated. Requiring the BST will help determine the potential for any unidentified barriers.

If the results of the BST indicate the need for a referral for a formal assessment, an extension cannot be denied until the formal assessment is complete. The Medical Examination & Capacity form may be used to obtain formal assessment information, but any individualized written evaluation plan that contains the necessary elements of a formal assessment is also acceptable. See the [Wisconsin Works Screening and Assessment Policy document](#) for policy related to necessary elements of a formal assessment, when an existing formal assessment is acceptable and when a new formal assessment is necessary. There may be situations in which the participant refuses a formal assessment. [BWP Operations Memo 03-71](#) provided policy clarifications regarding a participant who states that he or she has a barrier but refuses to cooperate with a formal assessment. This policy must also be followed when offering a formal assessment prior to an extension denial.

In order to allow enough time to complete the BST and any necessary formal assessments, the BST must be offered when the initial discussion of the extension process takes place in the 18th or 54th months rather than waiting until the 24th or 60th months.

Example: Jonna was placed in W-2 T in January 2002. The BST was administered in February 2002. Jonna left W-2 in March 2002. She returned to W-2 in February 2003 but was not required to complete the BST because her case had not been closed for a period of one year or more. Jonna will reach her 24th month in October 2004. In Jonna's 18th month, which is April 2004, a discussion between the FEP and the participant regarding an extension must take place. At that time, the FEP sees that the participant has not had the BST offered for two years (since February 2002) when she first became eligible for W-2. If the FEP is considering denying an extension for Jonna, the FEP must again offer the BST.

Example: Nina has a letter from a doctor stating that she suffers from a panic disorder and is afraid to be around groups of people. Nina was not able to get a full W-2 Medical Capacity form completed by her doctor. Nina also states that she is afraid to ride the bus because of her fear of crowds. The agency cannot deny an extension or refuse to consider her panic disorder as a barrier unless it has inquired whether assistance is needed or desired and offered assistance and accommodations to Nina to obtain the necessary verification (e.g., offering to provide the form to the psychiatrist itself and following up with the provider to obtain the form; offering to provide some method other than public transportation for Nina to get to the assessment).

NOTE ➤ Because formal assessments are not required for CSJ placements, W-2 agencies may approve CSJ extensions in the absence of any formal assessment documentation, including a W-2 Medical Examination & Capacity Form. Participants must still meet the CSJ extension eligibility criteria outlined in the W-2 Manual, [Section 2.3.5.1](#)

EXTENSION DENIALS OR DECLINATIONS AND CMS PLACEMENT

Currently, W-2 policy does not require a CMS placement for participants who have exhausted their time limits. However, the Case Management Services (CMS) Agreement Form ([DWSW-13269](#)) does recognize that many FEPs do, in fact, place individuals who were not eligible for or declined an extension into the CMS placement. This allows the FEP to continue providing case management services.

Effective the date of this memo, FEPs are required to offer a participant who was denied or declined an initial or subsequent extension, the CMS placement upon expiration of the participant's time limit or extension period. The participant must still meet W-2 financial eligibility criteria outlined in [Chapter 3](#) of the W-2 Manual and all non-financial eligibility criteria outlined in [Chapter 2](#) of the W-2 Manual, with the exception of the 60-month time limit, in order to be eligible for the CMS placement. However, participants being placed in CMS due to an extension denial or declination do not have to meet the characteristics outlined in [Chapter 7](#) of the W-2 Manual. In addition, the FEP must review the *W-2 Case Management Services (CMS) Agreement* form ([DWSW 13269](#)) with all potential CMS participants to help them understand what services will be offered as a part of CMS, including the 30 day reassessment of employability.

If the participant is unable to get a job within 30 days and has cooperated with job search efforts or other requirements in the employability plan, his or her employability should be reassessed and consideration given to placement in a W-2 cash paying placement if otherwise eligible. This does not mean automatic placement in a W-2 cash paying placement at the end of 30 days, but rather that the FEP reassess the case to review the factors that exist that are preventing the participant from obtaining employment and to determine if a new placement type is necessary. This process must include a reevaluation of an extension.

POLICY - CHANGES

PROCESSING CMC EXTENSIONS

Custodial Parent of an Infant (CMC) eligible individuals are automatically eligible for 24 or 60-month time limit extensions if their CMC placement will continue to tick a 24 or 60-month clock and they will reach their time limit during the CMC placement. See [Chapter 2](#) of the W-2 Manual for policies related to ticking the 24 and 60 month clocks while in a CMC placement. As long as CMC eligibility requirements are met, the FEP does not have to determine if the individual qualifies for an extension based on the extension criteria or submit the [W-2 Agency Time Limit Extension Record \(DWSW-11661\)](#) to the DWS regional office. The FEP must enter an extension covering the time until the child turns 12 weeks of age. The FEP must then review the CMC case prior to the end of the 12-week CMC time period to determine if the CMC participant wants and, if so, is eligible for continued W-2 services once the 12-week period ends. If the person wants cash assistance or other W-2 services beyond when the child turns 12 weeks of age, the FEP would have to follow normal eligibility determination policies, including extension eligibility if necessary.

Example: Marissa had a baby boy on August 16, 2004 and was moved to CMC. At that time, she had used 23 months of her CSJ time limit and was in her 24th month. Because Marissa had her baby more than 10 months after first being determined eligible for W-2, her 24-month CSJ clock would continue to tick while in CMC. Marissa's FEP must enter a CSJ extension that will allow Marissa to remain in CMC until November 8, 2004. Because extensions run monthly, the FEP would have to enter a 3-month extension. When Marissa's child turns 12 weeks of age, if Marissa does not want or is not eligible for additional W-2 services, the FEP must close the case as of November 8th. If Marissa wants cash assistance or other services beyond when her child turns 12 weeks of age, the FEP would follow normal eligibility determination policies, including extension eligibility, if necessary.

POLICY – CLARIFICATIONS

REAPPLY FOR W-2 SERVICES AFTER REACHING THE TIME LIMIT

If a W-2 participant reaches his or her time limit and leaves the W-2 program, he or she, at any time, may return to a W-2 agency, apply for W-2 and, if otherwise eligible, be re-evaluated for a 24- or 60-month extension. If the applicant meets W-2 financial and nonfinancial eligibility criteria but has reached the 60-month time limit, the FEP would have to determine extension eligibility based on the extension criteria. Also, if the applicant meets all W-2 financial and nonfinancial eligibility criteria and is determined appropriate for placement in a W-2 subsidized employment position for which he or she has reached the 24-month time limit, the FEP would have to determine extension eligibility based on the extension criteria.

When applying the extension criteria, the FEP must consider the applicant's prior W-2 participation and current circumstances. If the FEP determines that the applicant does not meet the extension criteria and is going to deny an extension, prior to doing so, the FEP must ensure that during previous W-2 participation the individual was properly screened and assessed. Also, the FEP must make sure that, during that time, accommodations and services necessary to address the participant's barriers were provided.

If the individual returns to the agency to apply for W-2, it is recommended that the FEP again offer the BST to the applicant if the FEP believes that the BST would help in identifying any hidden barriers. Although this is recommended, we do realize that in most cases, the individual would probably have had the BST offered at least two times prior to the initial extension denial and an additional offer of the BST may not uncover any additional barriers. If the returning applicant is experiencing barriers, these barriers would more than likely be identified through the informal assessment process rather than the BST. However, if the FEP determines that the BST is necessary in order to support extension eligibility, it would be necessary to offer an extension to allow for the processing of the BST as well as any necessary formal assessments. W-2 agencies should consider a shorter extension than what is allowed under the maximum extension period, e.g., a three-month 24-month extension instead of the maximum six-month 24-month extension or a five-month 60-month extension instead of the maximum 12-month 60-month extension.

If the applicant is not financially eligible or fails to meet one of the non-financial eligibility criteria other than the 60-month time limit, the FEP does not need to determine eligibility for an extension.

The W-2 agency must remember that it must process a W-2 application for anyone that requests W-2 services. This includes individuals who have previously reached either their 24- or 60-month time limits. More specifically, it includes, but is not limited to:

1. Individuals who voluntarily declined an extension but then choose to change their decision.
2. Individuals who previously did not qualify for an extension, leave the W-2 program but choose to return at a later time. They may choose to return for many reasons, including but not limited to:
 - A change in physical or mental health;
 - Unable to find employment;
 - Agrees to cooperate with program requirements; or
 - Has barriers that were never identified or were not addressed during prior W-2 participation.

In addition, these individuals, may, at any time, return to the W-2 agency to utilize Job Center resources as well as have eligibility determined for other programs such as, but not limited to, Food Stamps and Medicaid

EXAMPLE: Grace spent 24 months on W-2 T. At the time, she was recovering from physical injuries sustained in a car accident. At that time, she also suffered from depression. The FEP did not request an extension because by the end of 24 months she had recovered from her physical injuries. However, the mental health problems were never identified. Grace can return to the W-2 agency, reapply for W-2 and be reconsidered for a time limit extension.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) RECEIVED IN OTHER STATES

If an individual who has received more than 60 months of TANF assistance in another state applies for W-2, that individual may be eligible for an extension. Similar to those individuals who

reached their 60-month time limit while residing in Wisconsin, if the applicant who recently moved to Wisconsin meets W-2 financial and nonfinancial eligibility criteria but has used 60 months on his or her lifetime clock, the FEP would have to determine extension eligibility based on the extension criteria. When applying the extension criteria, the FEP would use information obtained during the W-2 informal assessment. In addition, the FEP must attempt to contact the other state for more specific information about the applicant. If the FEP is unable to obtain additional information, the information gathered through the informal assessment must be used to determine extension eligibility.

Example: John recently moved to Wisconsin from Florida where he received 58 months of TANF assistance. The FEP spoke with John's Florida caseworker and found out that John had been employed while in Florida. In addition, during John's interview, John said he wanted to find a job, but didn't know where to begin looking. The FEP did not identify any potential barriers during the interview, confirmed that John had held a number of jobs while in Florida and also completed his GED while living there. Based on that information, the FEP determined John most appropriate for a CMS placement. The FEP reviewed the CMS Agreement form, which John signed. While in CMS, John would be offered the BST and assigned various job search activities. At the end of 30 days in CMS, John's employability plan and his employability will be reassessed and he may be placed in a W-2 benefit placement if otherwise eligible. The eligibility process would include consideration of an extension, as John will still be two months from reaching his 60-month clock.

Example: Joyce recently moved to Wisconsin from Minnesota where she received 60 months of TANF assistance. Unable to find a job and in need of assistance, Joyce applied for W-2. The FEP attempted to contact Joyce's Minnesota caseworker, but was unable to speak with the worker. During Joyce's informal assessment, Joyce said that she has a history of depression, has been battling depression recently due to her divorce and that her children were having trouble adjusting to their new schools. Joyce repeatedly cried in her interviews and always had one of her children with her rather than in school. Based on that information, the FEP approved a six-month 60-month extension that will allow the FEP to offer Joyce the BST, formal assessment(s) if necessary and appropriate services to assist in stabilizing her situation and obtaining employment. The six-month extension will allow the FEP to gather more information about Joyce's situation and the appropriate next steps to assist Joyce in further stabilizing her situation and finding a job.

Example: Betty recently moved to Wisconsin from Illinois where she received 60-months of TANF assistance. Betty's FEP spoke with the Illinois case worker and found out that the worker had lost contact with Betty and that Betty had not participated with Illinois TANF requirements. Based on that information, the FEP denied a 60-month time limit extension, but did offer to place Betty in CMS. The FEP reviewed the CMS Agreement form, which Betty signed. While in CMS, Betty would be offered the BST and assigned various job search activities. At the end of 30 days in CMS, Betty's employability plan and her employability will be reassessed and she may be placed in a W-2 cash-paying placement if otherwise eligible. The eligibility process would include consideration of an extension, as Betty will not be eligible for W-2 without one because she has used 60-months of TANF assistance.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD CHANGES

Effective April 1, 2003, W-2 agencies were given decision-making authority for all extension approvals and denials. See [Operations Memo 04-13](#). By giving W-2 agencies full discretion in making W-2 time limit extension decisions, it was no longer necessary to include in the 2004 – 2005 Performance Standards (PS45) the measurement for timely submission of extension packets to the Department. Therefore, that portion of the standard was eliminated under PS45. However, PS45 continues to measure timely entry of extension decisions in CARES.

For more information on Performance Standards, see the PS45 web page at the following link: http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/w2/performance_standards/default.htm. All Performance Standard questions must be directed to DWS regional staff.

CONTACTS

BHCE CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

★Program Categories – FS – Food Stamps, MA – Medicaid, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – Food Stamp Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC – Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WtW – Welfare to Work, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

DWD/DWS/BDS/MM